

## WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A gas valve key comprising:
  - a handle;
  - a longitudinal shaft attached to one end said handle; and
  - a socket attached to another end of said shaft, said socket having a plurality of cascaded valve stem receiving cavities formed within said socket, each of the plurality of receiving cavities having successively reduced dimensions, including a first largest cavity forming an opening on one end of said socket, each of the plurality of cascaded receiving cavities being adapted to receive a valve stem of differing dimensions.
2. The gas valve key according to Claim 1, wherein said plurality of cascaded receiving cavities includes the first cavity being adapted to receive a 5/16 inch valve stem, and a second cavity adapted to receive a 1/4 inch valve stem.
3. A universal gas valve key for opening and closing a gas shut-off valve affiliated with a gas fireplace system, the gas shut-off valve having a valve stem with a square cross-section for operating said gas shut-off valve, said gas valve key adapted to be removably attached to the valve stem, said gas valve key comprising:
  - a generally elliptical-shaped handle having a planar profile with opposing sides and a peripheral edge defining the elliptical shape;
  - a longitudinal shaft defining a first axis and having opposing shaft ends, one shaft end being integrally formed to said peripheral edge of said handle such that said elliptical-shaped handle is generally transversely oriented and centered with respect the first axis; and
  - a cylindrically-shaped socket defining a second axis having a pair of circular ends, one circular end being integrally formed to the other shaft end of said shaft such that the second axis is coincident with the first axis defined by said shaft, said socket having a plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities formed within a body of said socket, wherein each of the plurality receiving cavities has successively reduced dimensions, a first largest cavity forming an opening on the other circular end of said socket, each of the plurality of cascaded receiving cavities adapted to receive a valve stem of differing dimensions,

wherein when said socket of said valve key is positioned over the valve stem, one of the plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities closely receives the valve stem with a minimal looseness tolerance such that when said handle is turned about the first axis defined by said shaft, said gas valve key imparts one of a clockwise or counterclockwise rotational motion and torqued force to the valve stem to one of close or open the gas shut-off valve affiliated with the gas fireplace system.

4. The gas valve key according to Claim 3, wherein said plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities including the first cavity adapted to receive a 5/16 inch valve stem, and a second cavity adapted to receive a 1/4 inch valve stem.

5. A gas valve key comprising:

a handle piece comprising,

a handle portion, and

a handle socket portion integrally formed to said handle portion, and having a first shaft receiving cavity disposed therein forming an opening on one end of said handle socket portion;

a longitudinal shaft defining a center axis and having opposing ends, one end force fit into said first receiving cavity of said handle socket portion to form a rigid interconnection between said handle piece and said longitudinal shaft; and

a second cylindrically-shaped socket defining a second axis and having a pair of circular ends, one end having a second shaft receiving cavity disposed within a body of said second socket therein forming an opening, the other shaft end of said shaft force fit into the second receiving cavity of said second socket to form a rigid interconnection between said shaft and second socket such that the second axis is coincident with the first axis, and the other circular end of said second socket having a plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities formed within said body of said second socket, each of the stem receiving cavities having successively reduced dimensions, a first largest cavity forming an opening on the other circular end of said second socket, each of the plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities adapted to receive a valve stem of differing dimensions.

6. The gas valve key according to Claim 5, wherein said plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities include the first cavity adapted to receive a 5/16 inch valve stem, and a second cavity adapted to receive a 1/4 inch valve stem.

7. A universal gas valve key for opening and closing a gas shut-off valve affiliated with a gas fireplace system, the gas shut-off valve having a valve stem with a square cross-section for operating said gas shut-off valve, said gas valve key adapted to be removably attached to the valve stem, said gas valve key comprising:

- a handle piece comprising,

- a generally elliptical-shaped handle portion having a planar profile with opposing sides and a peripheral edge defining the elliptical shape, and

- a handle socket portion having a cylindrical shape defining a first axis and a pair of circular ends, one end being integrally formed to said peripheral edge of said handle such that said elliptical-shaped handle is generally transversely oriented and centered with respect the first axis, and the other circular end having a first shaft receiving cavity having a square cross-section disposed therein forming an opening on the other circular end of said socket portion;

- a longitudinal shaft having a square cross-section defining a second axis and having opposing ends, one end force fit into said first receiving cavity of said handle socket portion to form a rigid interconnection between said handle piece and said longitudinal shaft such that the first axis of said handle socket portion and second axis of said shaft are coincident; and

- a second cylindrically-shaped socket defining a third axis and having a pair of circular ends, one end having a second shaft receiving cavity having a square cross-section disposed within a body of said second socket therein forming an opening on the end of said second socket, the other end of said longitudinal shaft force fit into said second receiving cavity of said second socket to form a rigid interconnection between said shaft and second socket such that the second axis of said shaft is coincident with the third axis of said second socket, and the other end of said second socket having a plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities formed within said body of said second socket, each of the stem receiving cavities having successively reduced dimensions, a first largest cavity forming an opening on the other circular end of said second socket, each of the plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities adapted to receive a valve stem of differing dimensions;

wherein when said second socket of said valve key is positioned over the valve stem, one of the plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities closely receives the valve stem with a minimal looseness tolerance such that when said handle piece is turned about the second axis defined by said shaft, said gas valve key imparts one of a clockwise or counterclockwise rotational motion and torqued force to the valve stem to one of close or open the gas shut-off valve affiliated with the gas fireplace system.

8. The gas valve key according to Claim 7, wherein said plurality of cascaded stem receiving cavities include the first cavity adapted to receive a 5/16 inch valve stem, and a second cavity adapted to receive a 1/4 inch valve stem.